

Building a Healthy A La Carte Program: "Making ents Out of Change"

A USDA Team Nutrition Funded Project

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Lists of Healthful Options

The A-List of Healthy School Snacks www.johnstalkerinstitute.org/vending%20project/healthysnacks.htm
"An updated and ever-expanding list of vending and snack products that meet the Massachusetts A La Carte Food & Beverage Standards to Promote a Healthier School Environment".

Snacks Meeting Connecticut's State Department of Education Healthy Snack Standards
www.state.ct.us/SDE/deps/Student/NutritionEd/SnacksMeetingStandards.pdf
List includes thirteen categories of snacks and beverages.

Healthy Snacks Meeting California's SB 19 School Nutrition Standards
www.nojunkfood.org/vendors/healthy_snack_list.html

Tools for Determining which Products Meet Your Standards

Healthy Snacks Calculator
www.seattleschools.org/area/nutrition-svc/calculator/calculator.dxml
Seattle Public Schools, Nutrition Services, 2005.

Enter your maximum nutrient standards and the nutrient data from your product's food label to find out if your snack meets your standards.

SnackwiseSM Nutrition Rating System for Smarter Snacking. www.snackwise.org. Children's Hospital, Borden Center for Nutrition and Wellness; Columbus, Ohio.

This software was developed by Registered Dietitians and evaluates snack foods for thirteen nutrient parameters. Includes a color coded food labeling system for items that are considered a "Best Choice" or to "Choose Occasionally" or "Choose Rarely". Easy for students ages five and up.

A La Carte Success Stories & Ideas

Making It Happen! School Nutrition Success Stories. Food and Nutrition Services, U.S. Department of Agriculture; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and U.S. Department of Education. January, 2005. <http://teammnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/makingithappen.html>
This exciting publication tells the stories of 32 schools and school districts from across the U.S. that have implemented innovative strategies to improve the nutritional quality of foods and beverages sold outside of the reimbursable meal programs. Download online or order one free copy per sight while supplies last.

Helping Students Make Better Food Choices in Schools.
Action for Healthy Kids, January 2006. www.actionforhealthykids.org/pdf/Final%20Report%20-%20Color.pdf

Learn about a la carte success stories in Illinois schools and districts.

Schools and School Districts that have Improved School Foods and Beverages and Not Lost Revenue
www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/improved_school_foods_without_losing_revenue2.pdf
Center for Science and the Public Interest (CSPI) Nutrition Policy Project, September 2003.

A La Carte and Other Occasions: School Milk Success Stories
www.milkdelivers.org/schools/ala_success.cfm. Milk Processor Education Program (MilkPEP), 2005.
Discover new ways to increase student milk consumption in school food service a la carte programs.

Policies and Model Standards for A La Carte Options

USDA Team Nutrition Healthy Schools: Setting Nutrition Guidelines for All Foods and Beverages Available on School Campuses During the School Day

www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/wellnesspolicygoals_guidelines.html

Use Team Nutrition resources and use other links to view food and beverage standards for schools.

Illinois NET Local Wellness Policy Toolkit

www.kidseatwell.org/flyers/Local%20Wellness%20Policy%20Toolkit%202006.pdf

This toolkit was coordinated by the Illinois NET (Nutrition Education and Training) Program and the Illinois State Board of Education with funding by a USDA Team Nutrition Training Grant.

Action for Healthy Kids Wellness Policy Tool

www.actionforhealthykids.org/resources_wp.php

This toolkit was coordinated by Action for Healthy Kids with associated partner organizations and Action for Healthy Kids State Team Members.

Ideas for Marketing Healthful A La Carte Options

Fruits & Vegetables Galore: Helping Kids Eat More. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services. February, 2004. http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/fv_galore.html.

Use Team Nutrition's helpful marketing tools and ideas to promote increased consumption of fruits and vegetables at your school. Download online or order one free copy per sight while supplies last.

All It Takes is Nutrition SENSE (Students Encouraging Nutritious Snacks Everyday) Toolkit.

www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfood/nutritionssense.htm Montana Team Nutrition Program and Office of Public Instruction School Nutrition Programs. September, 2003.

This tool kit contains ideas for implementing healthful food options in schools, including sample guidelines and marketing materials.

Illinois Data on A La Carte Programs

2003-2004 School Nutrition Environment Survey.

www.kidseatwell.org/illschoolsurvey.pdf. Coordinated by the Illinois NET (Nutrition Education & Training) Program and prepared by the Public Opinion Laboratory of Northern Illinois University, with funding from a Team Nutrition Training Grant.

View data from Illinois school food service a la carte programs.

Food Preference Surveys for Students

Fruit and Vegetable Preferences Survey.

http://socialmarketing-nutrition.ucdavis.edu/Tools/SomarkToolsList.php?key_m=17

Karen Cullen, DrPH, RD, LD, Baylor College of Medicine

This helpful tool will help you determine your students' fruit and vegetable preferences for your a la carte program.

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Healthful A La Carte Ideas



There are many healthy choices you can provide students through a la carte sales. To ensure success, survey the students to see what items they would like to buy. Here are just a few ideas that can help guide your students to more healthful choices when served in age appropriate portion sizes.

Beverages

- Bottled water



Dairy and Dairy Alternative Options

- Plain or flavored, fat-free or low-fat milk
- Flavored soy or rice milk fortified with calcium
- Low-fat flavored yogurt
- Part-skim string cheese
- Low-fat cottage cheese with garnish or fruit
- Plain low-fat cheese or cheese and veggie pizza with whole grain crust
- Low-fat cheese and bean burrito
- Grilled or baked low-fat cheese and vegetable quesadilla

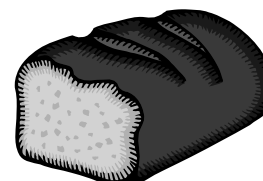
Fruit

- Seasonal fresh fruit wedges or sliced fruit with garnish
- Apple or celery wedges with peanut butter
- Fruit salad
- Packaged, dried fruit
- Canned or frozen fruit packed in juice
- 100% applesauce/fruit blend cups, no sugar added
- 100% fruit juice
- 100% fruit or fruit juice smoothies with low-fat or fat-free milk and no added sugar
- Frozen 100 % fruit or fruit juice bars, no sugar added
- Fruit and low-fat yogurt parfaits



Vegetables

- Raw vegetable sticks with low-fat dressing, yogurt, or hummus dip
- Salad bar with fresh vegetables
- Baked beans
- Baked potato with vegetable or chili topping
- Vegetable soup with legumes and broth
- 100% vegetable juice



Grains, Nuts and Seeds

- Whole grain English muffins, rolls, or bread
- Soft, whole grain bread sticks with marinara sauce
- Whole grain mini bagels with fat-free cream cheese
- Dry cereal, low-fat granola, or cereal bars
- Trail mix or dry roasted nuts and seeds
- Animal or graham crackers
- Low-fat grain, nut, or fruit muffins
- Mini rice cakes, flavored
- Soft or hard pretzels

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Building a Healthy A La Carte Program: Making Cents Out of Change

A La Carte Assessment Tool for School Food Authorities



Products

Evaluation Criteria	OK	Needs Improvement	Action Plan
Our school has a policy which defines specific nutrition guidelines for a la carte items sold during school meals. These guidelines convey age-appropriate portions that are consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and meet established federal, state and/or local nutrition standards.			
Students are involved in product selection via surveys, free snack sampling, focus groups, etc.			
The presentation, packaging, and garnishing of a la carte items enhances each product.			
A la carte selections vary daily.			
Fresh fruits and vegetables are offered to students daily.			
Whole grain foods are offered to students daily.			
A variety of low-fat or fat-free milk and dairy products are offered to students daily.			
The a la carte program utilizes fresh, locally grown products when possible (i.e. - produce from school gardens, farmers' markets, etc.).			

Price

Evaluation Criteria	OK	Needs Improvement	Action Plan
Healthier a la carte items are priced to provide students with an incentive to purchase. When these healthier items are purchased in combination as a more nutritious and/or reimbursable meal, further price savings is offered to students.			
Healthier a la carte items are priced less expensively per unit than similar retail items.			
Temporary price incentives are offered on new a la carte items to encourage sales.			

Placement

Evaluation Criteria	OK	Needs Improvement	Action Plan
Healthier a la carte items are prominently displayed in meal lines, satellite carts, or kiosks.			

Promotion

Evaluation Criteria	OK	Needs Improvement	Action Plan
Our school uses tools to plan, execute, and evaluate marketing strategies for the promotion of healthier a la carte items (i.e. - resources from USDA Team Nutrition).			
Students are involved in the promotion of healthier a la carte items through health, business, art or food and nutrition courses.			
Food service personnel have participated in classroom food demonstrations to highlight upcoming foods served on the a la carte line.			
Daily, weekly, monthly, and/or seasonal promotions are used to feature or celebrate specific food items.			
Nutrition facts are displayed prominently to promote the consumption of healthier items.			
Creative names with descriptive words are used to promote a la carte foods.			
Colorful props or marketing posters that promote the consumption of healthier foods are prominently displayed in the meal line and cafeteria.			
Our school promotes healthier eating in the cafeteria with occasional activities and games. Students are rewarded with non-food prizes that promote healthier eating and physical activity.			

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Attachment A

Food or Beverage	<i>HealthierUS School Challenge Nutrition Standards*</i> These criteria focus on decreasing fat and added sugar, increasing nutrient density, and moderating portion size.
Fruits and Non-fried Vegetables	Fruits and vegetables may be fresh, frozen, canned or dried, and they must be found in the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs. http://schoolmeals.nal.usda.gov/FBG/2003FBG/%20Section%202.pdf Examples of products that <i>cannot</i> be sold/served as a fruit or vegetable include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snack-type foods made from vegetables or fruits, such as potato chips, and banana chips; • Pickle relish, jam, jelly; and • Tomato catsup and chili sauce
Approved Beverages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flavored or plain reduced fat (2%), low-fat (1%), skim/nonfat fluid milk meeting State and local standards for pasteurized fluid milk and/or USDA approved alternative dairy beverages⁴; • 100% full-strength fruit and vegetable juices; and • Water (non-flavored, non-sweetened, <i>and</i> non-carbonated)
Any Other Individual Food Sales/Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calories from total fat must be at or below 35%** , <i>excluding nuts, seeds, and nut butters</i>. This is determined by dividing the calories from total fat by the total calories and multiplying by 100. If calories from fat are not available, multiply the grams of fat by 9 to equal calories from fat. • Calories from saturated fat must be at or below 10%. This is determined by dividing the calories from saturated fat by the total calories and multiplying by 100. If calories from saturated fat are not available, multiply grams of saturated fat by 9 to equal calories from saturated fat. • Total sugar must be at or below 35% by weight. This is determined by dividing the grams of total sugar by the gram weight of the product and multiplying by 100. This includes both naturally occurring and added sugars. This limit does not include fruits and vegetables or flavored milk as defined above. • Portion size for a la carte sales in the school cafeteria are not to exceed the serving size of the food served in the National School Lunch Program/School Breakfast Program; for vending sales the item package or container is not to exceed 200 calories.

⁴ There are no USDA approved alternative dairy beverages at this time. Public Law 108-265 (Child Nutrition Program Reauthorization) authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to establish nutritionally equivalent non-dairy beverages by July 1, 2005. Please check with the Illinois State Board of Education for clarification.

*The above *Nutrition Standards* are criteria for sales/service of a la carte and/or vended items from the United States Department of Agriculture's *HealthierUS School Challenge*. Please be aware that these criteria are only meant to apply to individually sold foods and that foods sold as part of a reimbursable school meal may not necessarily meet these criteria although menus meet the nutrition standards set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for school meals. Local policy makers may wish to modify the standards but should be aware that this may make schools ineligible to meet the criteria for the *HealthierUS School Challenge*.

**The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005* recommend a total fat intake of 20 to 35% for school-age children.

Schools and School Districts That Have Improved School Foods and Beverages and Not Lost Revenue

California

Aptos Middle School PTSA

San Francisco

Contact: Linal Ishibashi, Principal

Phone: 415-469-4520

Aptos Middle School, known as the city's most diverse middle school, recently made the decision to provide healthier school foods and beverages. Parents and staff proposed a pilot project to San Francisco's superintendent, Arlene Ackerman, who readily agreed. The move was undertaken after it was noticed that a number of children were making lunch entirely out of soda and chips. Some of the new healthier options offered at lunch include: fresh deli sandwiches, sushi, pasta, salads, homemade soups, and fajitas. Gone are Slim Jims, nachos, pre-packaged burritos, taco pockets, mega-cheeseburgers, French fries, hot wings, and oversized pizza, along with soda and chips. Teachers have commented on the improvement in students' behavior and academic performance. Meanwhile, the school food service was pleased to report that shortly after the changes were made, revenues increased and they were more than \$6,000 in the black at the end of the year. The Physical Education Department similarly reported that replacing soda with healthier choices in the locker room vending machines has resulted in an increase in revenue.

Folsom Cordova Unified School District

Sacramento County

Contact: Al Schieder, Food Service Director

Phone: 916-355-1180

Email: aschieder@fcusd.k12.ca.us

Before Al Schieder stepped in as the new food service director, district schools relied on high-fat and sugar-laden fast foods, frozen snacks items, and vending machines to feed students, the food services department was operating in the red, and few kids who were eligible for the free and reduced cost lunch participated. Now, the district no longer offers junk food, soda, and a la carte sales in the cafeteria. They not only improved the nutritional quality of foods, they are operating in the black, and have increased participation by students in the USDA school meal programs. They did all this by adopting a new philosophy that not only focuses on children's health and improved food service, but also tries to be more inclusive. Gone are the days when low-income students felt embarrassed and stigmatized by having to line up for their free and reduced cost meals while other students could choose burgers, French fries, and pizza. Now, a variety of

meals are served that meet the USDA nutrition standards, including: salads, lower fat pizza, sandwiches, pasta, wraps, rice and noodle bowls, and sushi. And students pay by punching in their student ID numbers, so no one has to know if or how much a student is paying for his or her lunch.

Monroe High School

Los Angeles

Contact: Lisa Jones, Grants Coordinator

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Phone (w): 818-892-4311

Email: lrath1@lausd.k12.ca.us

The wide array of healthful food and beverage selections now available at Monroe High School did not happen overnight. More than two years ago, the school had difficulty working within its existing beverage contract to eliminate sodas and other sugary beverages. The following year, with a new vendor, they stocked beverage vending machines with water, 100% juices, and sports drinks and eliminated low-nutrition foods with help from a grant sponsored by the California Departments of Education and Food and Agriculture. A marketing specialist was brought in to aid in the transition. Student nutrition advocates, the "Food Crew," taste tested new products that meet the SB 19 nutrition standards to identify options that taste great. They successfully worked to have a salad bar added to the cafeteria. Their switch to healthier options initially resulted in a dip in sales; however, once the students became involved with marketing healthier foods, sales returned to and surpassed previous levels. Teachers report that students are more focused in class and behavior has significantly improved, with a 74% reduction in violent suspensions and a 24% reduction in all suspensions since before the change in school foods and beverages.

Venice High School

Los Angeles

Contact: Jacqueline Domac, Chair, Health Department

Email: info@nojunkfood.org

Website: www.nojunkfood.org

A California state grant helped Venice High School eliminate unhealthy snack and beverage sales on campus. After one year, snack sales in the student store were up by over \$1,000 per month compared to the same time the previous year. Two years after the changes, snack sales per month had roughly doubled (\$6,100 in May 2002 compared with \$12,000 in March 2004). The initiative was spearheaded several years ago by a group of students concerned about their school's food selections. With the help of health teacher Jackie Domac, the students became nutrition advocates and began working on strengthening the school's food policy. The school vending machines now offer a variety of waters, 100% juices and soy milk, as well as a variety of healthy snacks including granola

and cereal bars. The students also raise significant funds with fundraisers that do not undermine children's health, such as a celebrity basketball game, car washes, and holiday gift wrapping. The positive response among students to the changes may be, in part, attributed to the school taking the students' food preferences into consideration and including them in the process.

Vista High School

San Diego County

Contact: Enid Hohn

Email: ehohn@vusd.k12.ca.us

Website: <http://www.vusd.k12.ca.us/cns/healthyvending.htm>

In the past, Vista High School depended on the sale of low-nutrition snacks sold in privately-owned vending machines to support many of its programs. Now the school sells healthier foods and makes double the money from their own vending machines. The change was spearheaded by Enid Hohn, the director of child nutrition services for Vista Schools. Faced with the need to raise additional money, while at the same time knowing she would have to do it by selling more junk food to students, Hohn proposed that the district buy its own machines and stock them with healthier items. Despite reservations on the part of the superintendent, Hohn was told to go ahead. Student taste tests were conducted to determine what would sell. The result: items such as granola bars, Oriental snack mix, Caesar salads, and tuna are sold in the vending machines. Soda is still available, but costs more than juice, milk, or water. The machines gross \$25,000 a month and average \$6,000 a month in profit.

Kentucky

Fayette County Public Schools

Fayette County

Contact: Roger Kirk, PTA vice president

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Email: rkirk@levelfield4.com

The school district renegotiated its vending contract to shift the proportion of healthy options from 21% to 72% of the beverage vending options. Beverages designated as "healthy" include water, 100% juice, and sports drinks. Nutritional criteria were set for healthy snacks, and the percentage of snacks meeting these criteria was increased from 1% to 40% in the new contract. Healthier beverages and snacks will be priced lower than other beverages and snacks. Since the changes took effect, first quarter revenues were up \$4,000 from the same time the previous year. Elementary schools in the district have been and will continue to be free of vending machines.

Maine

Old Orchard Beach Schools

Old Orchard Beach

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State tobacco settlement funds helped make it possible for Old Orchard Beach Schools to develop their Nutrition Team, consisting of members from food service, physical education, administration, and a school nurse. The team implemented Tulane University's CATCH nutrition education curriculum and wrote school vending policies that led to the removal of sodas and junk foods, and replaced them with water, 100% fruit juices, and healthier snack options. The vending machine signage was changed to advertise water instead of soda pop. The vendors were very cooperative in making the changes, and vending revenues have remained the same. Students have also taken an active role by writing their own nutrition policies, such as policies regarding foods served for classroom parties.

School Union 106

Robbinston, Calais, Alexander, Baring Plantation, Crawford

Contact: Heather Erickson, School Health Coordinator

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Profits from the vending machines at Union 106 schools pay for Student Council programs. Because of this, the Student Council played a major role in changing the vending practices. The change began when the Assistant Project Director for St. Croix Valley Healthy Communities and the School Health Coordinator made a presentation to the Council at a meeting. They offered the Council healthy snacks and drinks and gave the students examples of schools across the country that have been successful at changing vending. The Student Council was very resistant to the change; at one point the faculty director of the Council approached the School Board asking to keep the machines on all day, filled with junk food. The Wellness Team and the School Health Advisory Council met with the Student Council again, armed with healthy snacks and 100% juice, to plead their case once more, agreeing to organize and conduct fundraisers for the council should there be a decline in revenues. The principal offered to add a request in the next budget for the Student Council and offered to leave the vending machines on all day if they were filled with healthy drinks and snacks. The School Health Coordinator had the press attend the next Student Council meeting, where the Council agreed to remove soda from the vending machines. The story was front page news the next day. All schools in Union 106 have

removed soda and low-nutrition snacks from their machines, and the high school student council has reported an increase in revenue from some machines, and some machines have had no change in revenue.

Massachusetts

Shrewsbury School District

Shrewsbury

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The Shrewsbury school foodservice is serving up healthier options to students as it takes steps to phase out junk foods. The cafeterias are making improvements such as replacing fried items with healthier fresh food offerings. The la carte selections no longer include fatty chips, but instead yogurt, bagels, fresh fruit, 100% juices, and milk are offered. The snack bar in the High School, which still sells candy and low-nutrition snacks, is now closed during lunch periods. As a result, sales in the cafeteria increased by \$400 per week.

Minnesota

North Community High School

Minneapolis

Contact: Bryan Bass, Assistant Principal

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Faced with alarming statistics about childhood overweight and obesity rates, Assistant Principal Bryan Bass of North Community High School re-evaluated the school's beverage vending practices. With the support of the administrative team, he contacted the district's Coca-Cola representative, who was willing to work with the school to provide healthier choices. As a result, the school increased the number of vending machines from four to 16, stocked 13 machines with water or 100% juice, two with sports drinks, and one with soda (which has limited hours of sale). They also instituted competitive pricing, selling water for \$0.75, sports drinks and 100% juices for \$1.00, and soda and fruit drinks for \$1.25. The water machines were strategically placed in high traffic-areas and students were allowed to drink water in the classroom. Today, soda sales are down, but vending profits have increased by almost \$4,000 a year and the total number of cases of beverages sold has more than doubled from the previous school year, with water being the best seller.

Mississippi

McComb School District

McComb

Contact: Vivian Magee

Phone: 601-684-4661

In an effort to encourage students and staff to make healthier choices, the McComb School District has been working to implement new nutrition policies. In the elementary classrooms, junk foods can no longer be used to reward student performance. The district also has stopped using low-nutrition foods as fundraisers; instead, students now sell items such as candles, coupon books, and wrapping paper. The new vending policy prohibits all vending to elementary students, and allows for the sale of water, 100% juices, low-fat milk, and low-sugar sports drinks. Coca-Cola logos that had previously been on school vending machines have been replaced by pictures of water and 100% juices. Although the students have never had access to snack vending machines, the faculty snack machine has replaced its junk foods with healthier options. The high school reports that there has been no loss in revenue and that students will purchase what is provided in the machines.

Montana

Whitefish Middle School

Whitefish

Contact: Kim Anderson, Principal

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Whitefish Middle School switched from pop and candy to 100% fruit juice, water, and healthy snacks. It happened through the collaboration of the Montana Behavioral Initiative (MBI) (a program to develop better more positive interaction between schools and communities), students, and Team Nutrition (a USDA program to encourage students to make healthier food choices). According to Anderson, before the switch, student behavior immediately after lunch used to result in disciplinary action of six to eight kids a day. Since the switch, there are only one to two disciplinary actions per week. As for revenue, Principal Anderson said that there has been a decline in the gross but not in the net. The school has recently purchased its own cold vending machine to sell bagels, low-fat milk, and yogurt.

Pennsylvania

Sayre Middle School and South Philadelphia High School

Philadelphia

Sayre Middle School and South Philadelphia High School in Philadelphia changed their vending machines' beverage contents to remove sports drinks (sodas were already banned) and include only 100% juice, 25% juice, and water. Average monthly revenue from the machines did not decrease (see table).

Vending Machine Revenues in Philadelphia Schools (average sales per month)

	Prior to change in beverages	After change in beverages
Sayre Middle School	\$304	\$333
South Philadelphia High School	\$653	\$667

For more information, contact Dr. Margo Wootan or Joy Johanson of the Center for Science in the Public Interest at 202-777-8351.